VIEWS AND REVIEWS IN THE WIDE WORLD OF ART

National Association of Portrait Painters and Its New Exhibition.

By HENRY McBRIDE.

ABOUT this time last year a gentleman—the spokesman of a committee that had appropriated a sum of money for a commemorative portrait—asked my help in the selection of an artist. I gave him a list of the best known names and then remembered that the exhibition of the National Association of Portrait Painters was "on" and sent him to Reinhardt's to see it. He went, was much puzzled by the portraits he saw there and hesitated so long over the choice of an artist that I never did hear whether he had picked upon one of the Nationals or not. He should have, of course. They may none of them be great, but they are as good as the best we have, and with encouragement some of them may become greater. And the average committeeman who wanders afield in search of the artist who is just right is more than likely to stumble upon one of these talking painters who is just wrong with the brush.

The National Association is again this year at Reinhardt's and seems to be going it enthusiastically as far as output is concerned. There are forty exhibits. Whether I could recommend them with more assurance than I could command for those of last year I could scarcely say, for, to tell the truth, I have but a hazy recollection of last year's crop, and no certainty that I shall remember this year's very long. Nevertheless, I vaguely feel that committeemen shouldn't hesitate, but should order their portraits now, and plenty of them. The tradition of the portrait must not be allowed to drop. The times seem to be against it, but if ever so tiny a spark of the old feeling may be kept alive along may come a genius to fan it into flame. Just why our portrait painters of twenty years ago were having more fun out of the profession than can be had now I should like to know.

The ancient reason for the portrait no longer exists. There are other ways of preserving beloved lineaments—not better, but "other"—and the "other ways" are more in line with popular education, which is appallingly concerned with the photograph. There remains the original appeal to the vanity that fed upon the possession of a fashionable portrait, and that this has been allowed to drop is entirely the fault of the artists. The moment that an artist appears with a dazzling technique there will reappear the prosperous citizens begging for sittings as they used to from Sargent, Boldini and Zorn. There is no reclame in owning a portrait that is a good likeness but is stupidly painted, and our rich amateurs quickly find this out. Sir William Orpen is about the only distinguished figure working this line at present, and I understand he never lacks for orders.

To end this business section of my review as quickly as possible, I may say that if the committee desires a portrait of a youngish man it might be enticed by Philip Hale's "Dick Nickerson" into giving him the commission, for there is an unrelenting search for the line in this picture that gives a serious, Eakins-like aspect to the canvas. If, however, the sitter is aged, then the committee might beware of Mr. Hale, for there can be too many lines, even in nature. If a little boy be desired (though committees as a rule are indifferent to little boys) consult Lydia Field Emmet, who will turn the luckless youngster into a little angel; if something striking and loud for a professional man be wanted, a hint may be obtained from Leopold Seyffert's "Fritz Kreisler," and if an intellectual adult must be commemorated, then leave the Reinhardt Galleries altogether and cross the street to see Matilda Brownell's work in Knoedler's. "Miss Gildersleeve, Dean of Barnard College," in Miss Brownell's portfolio, exactly looks the part.

But before we leave the Reinhardt Galleries there are one or two other works that deserve scrutiny. George Bellows's "Portrait of Mrs. T." will interest his admirers more than anything he has shown since "At the Piano" of some years ago. It is not so successful as that work, because it is not so much "all in one piece." The "Mrs. T." is ambitious, but alas! labored. One can hear the wheels go round. It portrays an elderly woman in a fantastic white dress, and from a distance I flushed with pleasure, for I jumped to the conclusion that it was "Miss Haversham," that astonishing lady in "Great Expectations," and I thought, "Bravo, that is just the line for Bellows," with his subconscious tendencies toward caricature, and I swiftly pictured to myself a long line of Sairey Gampa, Bill Sikeses, &c., only to find on approaching nearer that the portrait was not "Miss Haversham" after all, but a "Mrs. T." The work creaks a little, as has been said. The drawing is open to question here and there, and especially in the right arm, but upon the whole the intensity of the effort commands interest.

The two portraits by George Luks will be apt to distress the most loyal of his clientele. His "Tammany Sachem" looks as if it had been painted under the direct influence of Sir Oliver Lodge. In other words, it has the quality of portraits painted from faded photographs. Robert Henri's "Little Girl" is agreeable but sketchy. The same terms apply to Adolphe Borie's "Shade Hat" and Charles Hopkinson's portrait of a youth.

Exhibitions in the Galleries.

The Durand-Ruel Galleries have arranged a Renoir exhibition and the Montross Galleries are exposing some water colors by Cezanne. In spite of the older fame of Renoir and his increasing prestige in the auction rooms it still seems easier to arrange Renoir than Cezanne exhibitions. The new Renoir show contains forty-one canvases of diverse periods, but the Cezanne water colors are only one dozen in all. The interest in these two masters remains unabated, particularly among young painters, and the productions of both men are scanned religiously.

The Renoirs include one or two important examples of the early manner, still lifes, landscapes, and a very solid and robust bather of the last period. There is nothing new to be said of these pictures at the moment, but the recent struggle for the Emmon's Renoirs at auction makes it worth while to quote a passage from a recent article by Pinturicchio in the *Carnet de la Semaine* concerning the debut of Renoir in the auctions. He wrote:

"On March 24, 1875, M. Durand-Ruel organized a sale of impressionist art at the Hotel Drout, in which figured twenty works by Renoir. On the day of the exhibition there were scandalous scenes which degenerated into riot and the sale had to have police protection. The twenty Renoir pictures brought in 2,251 francs, which was about 200 francs each. And, too, this 'maximum' was only achieved because certain of the artist's friends helped to bid them up.

"Among these paintings were the chefs d'oeuvres, now classic, of the 'Source,' 'Avant le Bain,' and the 'Pecheur a la Ligne,' which Charpentier obtained for 180 francs. The highest figure, 300 francs, was given for the 'Vue de Pont Neuf,' which sold for 100,000 francs ten days ago at the Hazard sale. Two years later, in May, 1877, in a second sale at the Hotel Drout, sixteen Renoirs brought 2,005 francs. At the Hochede sale, in 1878, the 'Pont de Chatou' was sold for 42 francs, the 'Jeune Fille au Jardin,' 20 francs, and the 'Femme au Chat,' which was later to triumph at the Centennial, brought 84 francs."

The moral, of course, is superfluous.

Also on view in the Montross Galleries is a group of ancient Chinese portraits, assembled by A. W. Bahr. Portraits of this character have only come to the West within a few years, for the reason, first, that the Chinese were reluctant to part with them, and, second, because few Western collectors knew of their existence and hence bids for them were scarce. The paintings are intimately connected with the Oriental ancestor worship and partly owing to feelings that inspired these portraits of the chiefs of families, there is much that is austere about them. The characterization, however, is very strong, and becomes more apparent upon study.

The portraits are exceedingly decorative, along lines, as has been said before, that suggest Holbein, and the flat colors of the robes have taken on a beautiful tone with the years.

John Noble's Paintings.

John Noble, who is said to have had a picturesque career in various parts of the globe, to have had success with an exhibition of his work in London, and to have achieved in that city the friendship of Augustus John, is now making a first appearance at the Daniel Gallery.

Mr. Noble paints with vigor, as befits the friend of Mr. John, and has lively and agreeable color at his command. Most of his pictures are concerned with subjects that permit the artist to introduce reflections in water, which he does very well. He is fond of groups of houses by a river bank, and in such pictures the houses have naively bright colors such as a child might give to them. It is possible Mr. Noble actually found such brightly tinted little towns upon his travels, or it is possible that he conjured up the tones from his palette. In any case the effects are decorative, pleasant and not without realism.

"Deux Femmes Assises," by Renoir; on view in the Durand-Ruel galleries.

NOTES AND ACTIVITIES IN THE WORLD OF ART

It takes considerable will power to look upon the bright side of the recent disaster at the Fine Arts Building, but amid so much that was desperately tragic in the present history of our arts, the consoling fact may be noted that at least the honors of the exhibition that the public was never to see had been decided and that they survive.

Always the most important one, that for meritorious achievements in architecture, was awarded this year to Delano & Aldrich, and this firm's reputation for sound workmanship and good taste is already so fixed that the award meets with general approval. The honor was not given for any specific building, but it is understood that the drawings for the Burden house at Syosset, L. I., had considerable weight with the committee.

The Burden house, which is reproduced herewith, is a credit to American architecture, particularly as it follows so closely what may be called the American tradition. It has a simplicity and a solidity of aspect, as though it had always been, and it begins with the charm that some houses take a generation to acquire. One of the features of it, inappreciable in the photograph, is the "texture" of the brickwork, which has been labored over personally by the architects in the effort to get away from the hardness and deadliness of so much of the mechanically-laid modern walls.

Other recent buildings of note that have been erected by Delano & Aldrich are the Knickerbocker and Colony Club buildings, the William Sloane house and the new residence of Harold Pratt on Park avenue.

Dear Sir:

There has been rather too much said about the Luxembourg Exhibition and the injustice shown the modern men.

There is one injustice, however, which seems to me to demand some consideration—that which has been shown Max Weber in his endeavor to assemble a modern group in an official exhibition of contemporary American art.

Many people have derided him for the trust he placed in an academic body of painters and for that reason hold him responsible for the rejection of the modern element in Paris.

Mr. Weber has shown great sincerity and an earnest effort to bring about a possible link between factions. The accusations against Mr. Weber seem to me entirely uncalled for and malicious.

Yours sincerely, LOUIS BOUCHE.

The new galleries of Di Salvo Brothers are commodious and excellently adapted to the display of antiques of all periods. The floor space is considerable and it provides all sorts of nooks and crannies where objects of art make the effect that they do in homes.

The present display contains much that is truly palatial in character. There is a sofa designed by the famous Lincke, with gilt bronze figures embellishing the carved frames; an escritoire, of French manufacture, ornamented with decorated porcelains, presumably Sevres; a Louis XV. commode, a carved cassone, interesting screens, bronzes and hangings. Some of the most impressive of the latter are in antique red velvet, with gold applique or embroidery.

Miss Merrick sends the following account of the "Annual Review of Models in Costume," held at the Art Workers Club, 224 West Fifty-eighth street, last week:

"The project, which has proved such an aid to artists, models and to art interests generally, originated with the president of the club, Miss Constance Curtis, herself a portrait painter of note. She was assisted by such well known painters as Lydia Field Emmet, Ellis Valk, Georgiana Howland, Gladys Wiles, daughter of the portrait painter; Eulabee Dix (Mrs. Alfred Beckers), Myra Freer, Martha W. Baxter, Rosina Boardman and Leslie Emmet.

"In spite of the blizzard over a hundred artists who eagerly await this charming reception faced the storm, and the club rooms were as crowded as if it were a day in May. Daniel Chester French, Irving Wiles, Karl Harshberg, Mrs. Henry Mottet, Mrs. Stowe Phelps, Allen Tucker, Louis Metcalf, Colin Campbell Cooper, Royston Nave, Mrs. Ripley Hitchcock and Howard B. Spencer are only a few of the notables who travelled long distances in the snow to see the pretty girls in costumes of many nations and periods walk slowly into the large drawing room, mount a model stand, take some characteristic pose for a moment and gracefully move out through the lines of chairs midst the applause of the spectators. And judging from the number of artists who later sought telephone numbers and addresses not a few received inspirations for future art creations. As all of the costumes are owned by the club and rented to members at a nominal fee, artists are greatly helped by this advantage.

"First in the pageant came Edna Mack, popular as a painter's and sculptor's model as Joan of Arc, leading the group of nations. She was followed by girls from Spain, Italy, Holland, Norway, Sweden and Japan wearing native costumes.

"A feature that added marked interest to the display this year was the gift to the club of a collection of original Victorian costumes, worn when a girl's waist measuring more than eighteen inches was considered 'heavy.' However, even in these days of the popular Venuslike proportions, enough slender girls were found to exhibit them, and decidedly picturesque they were, with hair parted and fascinating curls dangling from behind their ears. Grace Hudson was particularly inspiring in a mid-Victorian gown. She has posed for many of the delicate, slender figurines modelled by Albert Lenz, now so popular. Sylvia Jewell, one of the best known models in New York and a favorite with Childe Hassam, was lovely as an Empire bride, with a retinue of attendants. Two children, who wore plaid taffeta dresses and lace pantaletts and came into the room with their arms about each other, looked exactly like an enlivened daguerreotype. Frances de Bryl, who has posed for many of Frank Du Mond's most important decorations, was a lovely shepherdess in a Watteau gown.

"The third class displayed modern gowns. Some twenty girls wearing rich material, made into evening dresses, afternoon gowns, riding habits, &c., by the best of American and European dressmakers, were decidedly smart in their up-to-dateness and appeared perfectly at home in the elegant costumes donated to the club by wealthy society women. Anita Mayhew, always one of the busiest models and one of Lyendecker's favorites; Edith Dale, Leonore Burton, Lucille Hughes, Grace Brown, Betty Dodsworth, Emma Richardson and Marie Kolb, the latter wearing a ballet dancer's costume and pirouetting gracefully on the model stand, for she is a dancer as well as a model, were among the most attractive of the posers."

To confirm his theory of perspective in art Jay Hambridge, arts professor of Yale and Harvard universities, has gone to Europe to study famous pictures and statues at first hand. In his own words to further his researches into "Dynamic Symmetry" as applied to the human structure. His studies include phases as far back as the time of ancient Greece. Talking with the correspondent of THE SUN AND THE NEW YORK HERALD in London he said:

"The human figure as used by the classic Greek artists checks with nature; that is to say, it has the same constructional symmetry that I find in the actual skeleton.

"But the human figure as used by the great decorative artists and sculptors during the last 2,000 years does not check with nature.

"The excellence of the art of this later period must be due to other qualities than accurate knowledge of the human structure.

"If we could imagine a Greek sculptured figure, such, for example, as one from the Parthenon pediment, being touched into life we would recognize a fellow man—a super man, perhaps—but yet one of our kind, and we would feel comfortable in his presence.

"Could we do the same thing to a figure, say by Michael Angelo—for example, his Moses, or a figure from the Medici tomb—we should be decidedly uncomfortable in his presence.

"We should not recognize him as either god, prophet or man—he would be a monster.

"This does not mean that Michael Angelo was not a great artist, but that he did not understand the symmetry of men.

"The impression seems to have been created that I am searching for a 'secret of beauty.' This is not so. There are no secrets in art; there is either knowledge or lack of knowledge.

"The symmetry that I find in the skeleton, which is apparent in plant growth and Greek design, I call 'dynamic.' The symmetry of man in art during the last two thousand years, if we accept the canons of the studios and the dozens and dozens of treatises which have been written, is static.

"I have been asked many times recently if dynamic symmetry is really used by artists in picture composition. There is an answer to these inquiries in a picture now being shown in London. Among the many war pictures by British artists in Burlington House there is a lithograph by George W. Bellows of New York. Mr. Bellows, I consider, is one of the most virile of the younger American painters. The picture was presented to the exhibition by the Misses Rivington, and the catalogue title is 'The Execution of Nurse Cavell.'

"This lithograph is one of a number made by Mr. Bellows during the progress of the war, and, with its companions, forms a unique group. The series represents the spontaneous expression of indignation of an American gentleman as news reached him of the perpetration of certain atrocities. To have first hand report upon the method used by the artist in arranging his composition of this picture I cabled to Mr. Bellows. His answer has just reached me. It is: 'Yes, 1427.' The number represents a dynamic area now well known to American artists. The shape possesses certain peculiar properties of subdivision. These appealed to the artist evidently, as he used them as a base on which to weave this design.

"One evening last spring I was present at a gathering of members of the Architectural League in New York and heard Mr. Bellows explain in detail to the assembled architects the methods he used in composing this series of lithographs by the angles of dynamic symmetry. Mr. Bellows was followed that evening by other painters, designers and craftsmen, who each in turn explained his angle of approach in using this symmetry to solve difficult problems of composition."

With the destruction by fire of the private art gallery in the Fine Arts Building recently, the Society of Independent Artists argues that a public one should replace the exterminated private gallery. In a resolution passed by the directors, the society, as the largest art group in the country, points out the necessity and advisability of erecting a new building where art exhibitions can be held free and to which all art societies of all tendencies and schools could look for free housing. In such a building, says the resolutions, the Independents would seek representation for their exhibitions.

"We could then admit artists without having to charge them and put upon them the burden of paying for rental and light, as we are doing now in preparation for the exhibition to begin in March," said John Sloan, president of the society, anent the resolution. For artists who were unable to pay, Mr. Sloan sent out an appeal to laymen who would pay for them. That is how many artists were enabled to enter the exhibition when they had all but given up hope. "With a building where all could hold their exhibitions free, such a condition would not have to arise," said Mr. Sloan. The resolution is to be forwarded to Mayor Hylan.

Two new Royal Academicians have been created: D. Y. Cameron, whose etchings are so well known, and George Henry, whose work is not so well known, but who has claimb, it seems, upon the affections of Americans. Mr. Henry began his career as a worker in black and white, and he tells himself, that in those days he did 700 drawings for an American firm, all of kitchen ranges. "It nearly broke me up," he added, to the London interviewer.

At the same time Robert Burns resigned his associate membership in the Royal Scottish Academy without assigning any reason for the step. An English newspaper gives this story under the caption: "Unusual Art Incident."

Following the recent exhibition of works by William Blake, the Grolier Club has on view a series of metal and embroidered bindings. In the course of the last year two other shows of bindings (one old, the other modern) had already attracted many bibliophiles to the Grolier Club's rooms.

The present exhibition falls roughly under three heads: metal bindings of the Middle Ages, silver bindings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and embroidered bindings of the same period. The first section includes some of the greatest examples in the world, such as the celebrated Ashburnham Gospels, with their wonderful eighth century enamels, and the great binding with the arms of Emperor Charles V.

Other monastic bindings are inlaid with Mosan and Limoges enamels, decorated with ivory plaques or studded with rock crystal cabochons. The large series of open work silver bindings is unique, and comprises the pick of several great private collections. We are reminded of the "Silver Library" at Danzig by the numerous specimens from the German and Dutch States. From the Netherlands also come the quaint tortoise shell covers. A group of early Greek and Armenian bindings have a charm of their own, and there is a beautiful specimen of workmanship ascribed to Benvenuto Cellini, or his pupil Manno, made for Cardinal Farnese.

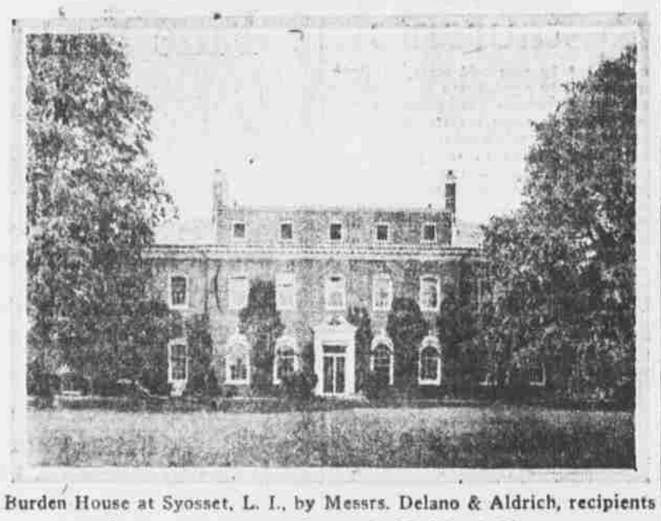
The embroidered bindings are chiefly English of the seventeenth century. Prominent among them stands out the Bible of King Charles I., a truly magnificent piece of needlework. But there are also some valuable Italian and French armorial bindings, embroidered with the arms of Pope Benedict XII., Queen Marie de Medici and others; and the club has drawn from its own and the members' collections some beautiful and dainty French embroidered bindings of the days of Marie Antoinette.

Tapestries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries tastefully adorn the walls of the exhibition room, and form a fitting background for the glittering gold and silver in the showcases. The exhibition is free to the public and will continue until Saturday, March 6. It is open from 10 A. M. until 6 o'clock P. M., Sundays included.

For the portfolios of prints by modern American artists, issued by the Weyhe Gallery, Carl Zigosses has written a preface from which the following is taken:

"But fine prints as a class are more than historical documents; they are also works of art. They have an intrinsic appeal entirely apart from the question as to whether they were made in the fifteenth or the twentieth century. They possess uniqueness, magic, a spiritual impress, the stamp of vivid personality, a singing quality of line or mass of black and white, some telling economy of expression that satisfies in a flash of immediate comprehension. In short they have in them that indefinable but extremely significant something that men call art.

"Thus throughout their history prints have had a dual purpose, realistic yet abstract, truthful yet decorative. Prints are, as it were, the changelings in the world of art, a cluster of paradoxes, twin products of phantasy and intellect. At first they always seem of a slightly forbidding and wayward aspect; one must woo them and study them to discover the treasures hidden within. But once one breaks through their austere indifferences and learns their quaint turns of speech, what a fairyland do they open up before one! It is then that their changeling nature reveals itself. They receive their nourishment and growth from old Mother Nature—whence comes their interest in life and truth and humanity—but one always feels that they were really born in the Land of Make Believe, in the mysterious Kingdom of Black and White, where symbols become real and beauty is sole mistress and queen. Throughout all prints one may recognize this dual purpose, the will and truth and the esthetic convention, or as old Erasmus put it, 'the natural aspect of a thing and the prefect symmetry and harmony.' It may be this very paradox, this brave attempt to fuse together the real and the ideal, is their deep attraction to us. Prints appeal to the changeling in us all."



Burden House at Syosset, L. I., by Messrs. Delano & Aldrich, recipients of the Architectural League's Medal of Honor.